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AUTHORITY

OAG D/A ltr 29 Apr 1980; OAG D/A ltr 29 Apr  
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**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL**  
**WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310**

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (9 Jul 68) FOR OT RD 682180

17 July 1968

**SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 6th Battalion, 84th Artillery, Period Ending 30 April 1968 (U)**

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1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 5b, AR 525-15. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT RD, Operational Reports Branch, within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

*Kenneth G. Wickham*

KENNETH G. WICKHAM  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

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2d Bn, 138th Artillery

6th Bn, 84th Artillery

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HEADQUARTERS  
6th BATTALION (155mm) (Towed) 84th ARTILLERY  
APO San Francisco 96294

AVGK-AK-3

12 MAY 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion 84th Artillery for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSTOR-65 (RI)

TO: See Distribution

1. Section 1. Operations: Significant Activities

a. The Battalion was organized at Fort Irwin, CA. on 25 August 1967 under provision of General Order 111, Headquarters, Sixth Army. The POSD (Personnel on Station Date) was 18 September 1967. The Battalion was at 60% strength as of POSD. It was programmed to begin training on 25 September 1967 but USCONARC directed that training not begin until the battalion reached 80% strength. The Battalion reached 80% strength and training under ATP 6-100 began on 9 October 1967.

b. Shortly before the training program began, the Battalion received instructions through Sixth Army for USCONARC that a nuclear capability must be attained prior to deployment. The training program was revamped to include nuclear training for 60 key personnel.

c. The objectives as seen by the commander at the time were:

(1). Successful completion of battery ATT.

(2). Successful completion of the Sixth Army and USCONARC TPI (Technical Proficiency Inspection).

(3). Successful completion of battalion ATT.

(4). Preparation and packing of equipment for shipment.

d. The Sixth Army TPI was completed on 21-22 November 1967. The USCONARC TPI was completed on 14-15 December 1967. Battery ATT's were completed on 17 December 1967.

e. Forty percent of the Battalion was placed on combination holiday/POM leave on 18 December 1967.

f. On 23 December 1967, the Battalion Executive Officer, Property Book Officer, and Intelligence Sergeant departed for a 15 day visit of II Corp Tactical Zone in RVN.

FOR OFF RD  
682180

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AVGK-AK-3

12 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion 84th Artillery for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI) (Cont'd)

g. The Battalion ATT was completed on 17-18 January. Preparation began for the shipment of equipment on the ERD (Equipment Readiness Date) of 12 Feb 68. All major items of equipment were processed through the Central Maintenance Facility at Fort Irwin, CA.

h. In October 1967, the Battalion had requisitioned eighteen 20-Ton hydraulic jacks which were to be modified for artillery use as outlined in an issue of Artillery Trends. When the jacks were issued, a work order was submitted to have the work accomplished. The S4 of Fort Irwin would not authorize the modification because he believed that the Artillery Trends publication was not an adequate authority for such MO. After much discussion and many phone calls to USCONARC, Sixth Army, and the Army Material Command, the official blueprints were mailed to Fort Irwin and arrived one week prior to ERD. Six jacks were modified prior to shipment. The remaining were completed after arrival in country. Most were inoperative after a few weeks of use with the result that mechanical speed jacks had to be built.

i. The Battalion equipment was shipped from Fort Irwin to Long Beach CA. 12-14 February. POM leaves were staggered from 8 February to 2 March. All personnel were authorized 15 days.

j. On 051400 March, the main body embarked on the USNS Geiger. The Advance Party, consisting of the Battalion Commander, three Firing Battery Commanders, Property Book Officer, Personnel Officer and 22 EM departed CONUS on 12 March 1968 and arrived at QUI NHON, RVN on 16 March 1968. On March 19th the general cargo arrived at QUI NHON and was transported to CAMP RADCLIFF, AN KHE. The battalion arrived and debarked at QUI NHON on 24 MARCH 1968. The 2nd Battalion 17th Artillery coordinated transportation for all personnel and equipment to CAMP RADCLIFF. The Battalion closed at 1530 hours the same day with a strength of 41 Officers, 4 Warrant Officers and 566 Enlisted Men.

k. Preparation immediately began to make the area satisfactory for occupation. Batteries A and C moved into partially prepared firing position areas and B Battery occupied an area which required extensive work. The Battalion Headquarters and Service elements moved into a vacated base area. The period 24-31 March was spent in unpacking equipment and adjusting to the base camp environment. The battalion was messed in a consolidated mess hall until the Battery mess halls became operational.

l. Mission-peculiar training began during the second week in country. Much of the training was not fully effective due to many details and commitments to include:

(1). 25-28 March - 120 EM to Division Training School (Combat indoctrination).

(2) 1-4 April - 115 EM to Division Training School.

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12 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion 4th Artillery for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI) (Cont'd)

(3). Construction of howitzer parapets; model main-line, three man fighting bunkers; area peculiar sanitation facilities; and sandbag revetments for all billets.

m. Key Officers and NCO's of the battalion made visits to other artillery units for observations on operations peculiar to RVN.

n. Training and activities during the period of 31 March - 8 April were:

(1). Firing of individual and crew-served weapons

(2). Field fortifications

(3). Adaption to 24-hour operations

(4). Section drill to include renewal of proficiency with equipment which had not been available for a period of 42 days.

(5). FDC drill to include 6400 mil capability.

o. On 4 April 1968 the 41st Artillery Group Commander determined that the battalion was not ready for deployment for combat roles. Training was intensified and deployment was rescheduled for 8 April 1968.

p. On 6 April, the Battalion, minus approximately 70 men left as a rear detachment in AN KHE, deployed to LZ IVY, vic HR 8963. Mission was to reinforce the 7th Battalion 13th Artillery in support of 173d Airborn Brigade operation VELLVET HAMMER. Occupation of the small position area at LZ IVY was confused, including shifting of battery position areas after construction of howitzer and individual emplacements was underway. Personnel of the battalion were short picks and shovels required for preparation of emplacements. Engineer bulldozer support was not available at the time of occupation of the position.

q. At 090215 April the battalion was attacked with approximately 70 rounds of 82mm and 60mm mortars. Results were a total of four JS KIA and 43 US WIA. Approximately fifteen vehicles were damaged. The FDC from C Battery, which had been placed in a large excavation in the area, received a direct hit. There were three KIA and eight WIA from this FDC along with destruction of its equipment. During the remainder of 9 April 4000 rounds of 155mm Ammunition programmed for the operation were delivered to the unit at the congested LZ. Three bulldozers were dispatched to the LZ to assist in preparation of the area.

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion 4th Artillery for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI)

r. On 10 April, the Battalion displaced: HHC, A and D Batteries to LZ CRYSTAL (BR 894658); and C Battery to LZ JENNY (BR 842567). One shift from the Battalion FDC was provided to C Battery to replace personnel lost in the mortar attack. Movement of the ammunition on site required all available Battalion trucks plus all that could be provided from units in the area. Movement was completed by 2000 hrs. Battery A and Battalion FDC's were combined to form a joint FDC for 24-hour operation.

s. On 11 April, A Battery fired two smoke rounds into the perimeter barrier wire of C Battery 7th Battalion, 13th Artillery in vicinity of LZ JENNY. The A Battery position had been misplotted 1200 meters on the Battalion firing chart.

t. On 12 April, C Battery fired one round with a 75 mil quadrant error resulting from computing site as 83 mils instead of 8.3 mils. Later in the day, the battery fired one round 200 mils in error in deflection due to faulty lay of one howitzer.

u. The Commanding General of 173d Airborn Brigade suspended the battalion from firing in support of friendly troops on 12 April.

v. On 13 April 1968, a faulty timber resulted in the collapse of the roof of C Battery FDC bunker, injuring one man.

w. On 14 April, the battalion furnished a quota of 10 FDC personnel to a FIDAC school.

x. On 14 April, the Commanding Officer, 41st Artillery Group directed immediate infusion and replacement of selected key personnel, including the Battalion Commander, Assistant S3, Battery Executive Officers, one Chief of Firing Battery, and two howitzer Section Chiefs per battery. C Battery was moved to LZ UP-IFT to construct a new battery position area. During and after the infusion, the battalion continued to train and fire interdiction fires with safety officers checking each round fired.

y. On 19 April, the Battalion displaced and occupied positions at KHE SANH NORTH (CR 041 333) with the mission of GS of FWMAF, reinforcing the 60th ROK FA Artillery in support of Operation MENG HO 11. At the end of MENG HO 11, the ROK Artillery Commander commended the Battalion for the support rendered, but also commented on the lack of speed. At this time, the Battalion was using safety officers in two batteries. During the operation, a small tactical command post had been established at CAMP TOWNES (BR 8933) on 19 April because of limited space at the fire base at KHE SANH NORTH. While in the position at KHE SANH, extensive training was conducted for howitzer sections and FDC's. Initially the battalion FDC computed all data, using a double check system and transmitted the data through the Battery Executive Posts to the guns. Subsequently, new

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AVGK-AK-3

12 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion, 34th Artillery for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI) (Cont'd)

1. y (Cont'd) FDC personnel were assigned and trained from existing and outside resources. A reorganization was completed, and all of the Battery FDC's and the Battalion FDC became operational.

z. On 26 April, Operation MENG HO 11 was terminated and the Battalion was redeployed on 27 April as follows:

- (1) Tactical Headquarters and A Battery to LZ UPLIFT (ER 918 750)
- (2) B Battery to LZ TOM (ER 893 088)
- (3) C Battery to LZ CRYSTAL (ER 895 665)

aa. On 27 April, the remainder of Headquarters and Service Batteries closed out of CAMP TOWNES and rejoined the Battalion at LZ UPLIFT,

bb. As of the end of the reporting period the Battalion (-) is GS Reinforcing the fires of the 7th Battalion 15th Artillery; B Battery is GS, Reinforcing the fires of the 3rd Battalion, 319th Artillery. Training continues with two Batteries still utilizing safety officers to check each round fired.

2. Section 2. Lessons Learned: Commanders Observation, Evaluations and Recommendations.

a. Personnel:

(1) OBSERVATION: Proper grade structure should be provided to newly formed units deploying for combat support mission..

(2) EVALUATION: The Battalion was formed, trained, and deployed with a shortage of experienced NCO's in many key operational jobs. It was short 15 E5's, seven E6's and two E7's primarily in the Artillery Crewman MOS 13B40. Many of the assigned E5's were two-year inductees with only one year total service at time of deployment.

(3) RECOMMENDATION: Provide requisite grade MOS structure and experienced NCO's for newly formed units.

b. OPERATIONS:

(1) Operations with higher headquarters.

(a) OBSERVATION: The Battalion staff of a deploying unit should have experience operating in the field with a higher headquarters for extended periods, with emphasis on 24 hour operations.

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AVGK-AK-3

12 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion 84th Artillery for period ending 30 April 1968, ROS CSFOR-65 (RI) (Cont'd)

(b) EVALUATION: During the training period at Fort Irwin, the Battalion did not have an opportunity to work with a higher headquarters while performing field duty over an extended period. No reports were required on a daily basis. All operations and logistical matters were planned prior to movement to the field. Result was a battalion untrained in extended field operations without the convenience of a logistic base close to the area.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That all battalions programmed for deployment be required to operate with a higher headquarters under field conditions for a period of at least two weeks. An operational readiness test administered by a team of artillery officers with recent combat experience in RVN should be incorporated into the ATT for each deploying battalion.

(2) Operations in country:

(a) OBSERVATION: Upon arrival in country, a whole new set of rules has to be learned.

(b) EVALUATION: When the battalion arrived in country, it was confronted with the task of learning the contents of numerous SOPs. A new glossary of terms had to be digested.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That upon arrival in country, the initial deployment of the firing batteries be with an established battalion headquarters and the new battalion staff be allowed to observe the operation of an established headquarters on a full time basis. Infusion of key experienced personnel e.g. Chief of Section, FDC Computer, Asst S3 and Battery Officers should be accomplished prior to committing the battalion as a unit.

c. Training:

(a) OBSERVATION: Personnel at all levels were not organized for 24 hour operations.

(b) EVALUATION: The battalion had not been required to operate on a 24 hour basis for periods longer than 1½ to 2 days. Efficiency and accuracy became impaired during initial stages of employment in combat operations.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That predeployment training include extensive field exercises requiring units to maintain 24 hour operations.

(3) 6400 Mil firing requirement:

(a) OBSERVATION: Howitzer sections were unfamiliar with

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AVGK-AK-3

12 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion 84th Artillery for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI) CONT'D

3. (a Cont'd). 6400 mil firing techniques.

(b) EVALUATION: Personnel within howitzer sections were slow in response to missions requiring large shifts. Equipment for speed shifting for 6400 mil capability was provided just prior to embarkation of the unit.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That speed shift jacks be made an item of equipment for all 155mm Towed units and that provisions for training and testing 6400mil capabilities be incorporated in ATP's and OTT's.

(4) Responsibilities of Section Chiefs for Safety:

(a) OBSERVATION: Section chiefs were not adequately trained in responsibilities pertaining to safe firing of howitzers.

(b) EVALUATION: Section chiefs required extensive supervision by officer personnel initially upon becoming operational, because of CONUS requirements for safety officers to check data for safety.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That howitzer Section Chiefs be given extensive practical training with minimum officer safety supervision.

(5) Proficiency in field fortification construction:

(a) OBSERVATION: All personnel were deficient in knowledge and proficiency in construction of fortifications for personnel and weapons.

(b) EVALUATION: Deficiencies in CONUS training point up a need for providing material and instructions, in detail, for construction of typical fortifications required in RVN.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That extensive practical training in construction of typical fortifications be intergrated into operation readiness tests prior to deployment of units to RVN.

(6) Loss of proficiency of guncrews due to separation from equipment:

(a) OBSERVATION: Howitzer crews were initially slow and had loss keen familiarity with operation of equipment.

(b) EVALUATION: The battalion was without equipment to maintain training proficiency for a 42-day period which resulted in a decrease in proficiency in operating equipment and servicing the guns.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That deploying units be sateillited on another unit of equal TOE structure for purpose of maintaining section integrity and servicing the gun during the period from ERD to deployment.

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AWK-AK-3

12 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion 84th Artillery for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI) Cont'd

d. INTELLIGENCE:

(1) Personnel Clearances.

(a) OBSERVATION: Personnel clearances are difficult to obtain in RVN.

(b) EVALUATION: Clearance action in many cases is delayed, paperwork is lost, and many personnel are delayed in obtaining clearances due to rapid infusion and delay in forwarding routine paperwork.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That, when possible, all personnel clearances be initiated prior to deployment to RVN.

(2) Consolidation of S2, S3 classified files.

(a) OBSERVATION: Duplication of effort existed in maintenance of S2 and S3 classified files.

(b) EVALUATION: The volume of classified material in RVN is such that difficulty is experienced in maintaining accountability for classified documents in separate locations within the operations complex.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That S2 and S3 establish consolidated classified files under the control of the S2, to effect positive security-control of all classified material within the Headquarters.

(3) Meteorological equipment maintenance:

(a) OBSERVATION: There is a lack of qualified metrological maintenance personnel available at field maintenance shops.

(b) EVALUATION: Excessive delay in repair result from requirement to send equipment to depot maintenance for repair.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Qualified metro maintenance personnel be provided at field maintenance shops.

e. LOGISTICS:

(1) Lack of required issue of WADTOC Items.

(a) OBSERVATION: The Battalion was directed by HQUSARV to cancel requisitions for WADTOC Base Camp Development kit.

(b) EVALUATION: The unit was advised that kits were available

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AVGK-AL-3

12 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion 84th Artillery for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (RI) (Cont'd)

(b, Cont'd) for issue in country to units deploying after 31 Dec 67 on a selected items basis. Result was the loss of much needed generators and building materials required to maintain and operate base camp areas.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That newly deploying units be given priority on issue of WABTOC items on a selected basis to meet requirements for operating and maintaining base camp areas.

(2) Loss of TO&E trailers prior to deployment:

(a) OBSERVATION: The battalion was directed by USCONARC to turn in all TO&E trailers prior to ERD as an average of trailers existed in country and issue would immediately be forthcoming upon arrival in RVN.

(b) EVALUATION: The operation of the unit and its ability to move in the role of the II CTZ "Strike Battalion" has been seriously hampered by non-availability for issue in-country of TO&E trailers.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That priority of issue of organic TO&E trailers be given to this unit.

f. ORGANIZATION:

(1). OBSERVATION: The role assigned to the battalion is not fully compatible with its type organization.

(2). EVALUATION: The battalion has been assigned the role of a maneuvering artillery "package" to be deployed quickly to areas requiring such fire support. Numerous problems have been experienced in the capability of the battalion to operate smoothly in such a demanding and challenging role. Specific deficiencies include lack of organic engineer support resulting in sporadic bulldozer availability; lack of organic aviation for operational, logistics, and administrative missions (the battalion operates up to 150 miles from its primary base camp at AN KHE); lack of organic DS ordnance support which results in frequent crises in spare parts and maintenance support availability.

(3) RECOMMENDATION: A small task force be constituted to evaluate the organization required for the maneuver, "strike" artillery package and appropriate additions be provided.

g. OTHER: CO, 41st Artillery Group directed preparation of an after-action report on the deployment of the 6th Battalion, 84th Artillery. The report is attached at Inclosure I.

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AVGK-AL-3  
SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion 84th Artillery for period  
ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSTOR-65 (RI) (Cont'd)

12 May 1968

12

David W Firebee Jr.

1 Incl

as

DAVID W FIREBEE JR  
LTC, Artillery  
Commanding

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AVGK-C (12 May 1968) 1st Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion, 84th Artillery for  
Period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

Headquarters, 41st Artillery Group, APO San Francisco 96368 23 May 1968

TO: Commanding General, I Field Force Vietnam Artillery, ATTN: AVFA-AT-D,  
APO San Francisco 963501. (U) Reference paragraph 1h, page 2. Mechanical speed jacks mentioned  
are rigid pedestals.2. (C) Reference paragraph 1r, page 4. C Battery displaced to LZ Venus  
(BR 842567).3. (U) Reference paragraph 1s, page 4. C Battery, 7th Battalion, 13th  
Artillery was at LZ Venus, not LZ Jenny.4. (U) Reference paragraph 1y, page 4. Battalion displaced to Ky Son  
North. Further references to Khe Sahn should read Ky Son.

5. (U) Reference paragraph 2a, page 5, Personnel. Concur.

6. (U) Reference paragraph 2b1, page 5, Operations with higher headquarters.  
Do not concur that a two-week training exercise under a higher headquarters  
in CONUS is required. 41st Artillery Group furnished the liaison team, 6th  
Battalion, 84th Artillery with a complete set of SOP's in January 1968.  
Careful study on the part of the battalion would have simplified acclimat-  
ion to operations in RVN.7. (U) Reference paragraph 2b2, page 6, Operations in country. Do not  
concur. Recommendation is impractical. Upon arrival in country, organi-  
zation should possess sufficient proficiency to adapt quickly to peculiar  
requirements of RVN. Immediate infusion of selected key personnel would  
assist deploying unit in becoming oriented more rapidly.8. (U) Reference paragraph 2c, page 6, Training. Concur. Paragraph  
should appear after 2b(6).9. (U) Reference paragraph 2b(3), page 6, 6400-mil firing requirement.  
Concur.10. (U) Reference paragraph 2b(4), page 7, Responsibilities of Section  
Chiefs for Safety. Do not concur. In CONUS or in country, chiefs of section  
must be impressed with their responsibility to supervise. Lack of super-  
vision was the primary cause of the rash of artillery incidents in this  
battalion upon deployment. Chiefs of section must train in CONUS as if  
safety officers were not present.11. (U) Reference paragraph 2b(5), page 7, Proficiency in field fortification  
construction. Concur.

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AVGK-C (12 May 1968) 1st Ind 23 May 1968  
SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion, 84th Artillery for  
Period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

12. (U) Reference paragraph 2b(6), page 7, Loss of proficiency of gun crews due to separation from equipment. Concur that added training of this battalion was required. In two weeks after arrival in country, battalion fired over 1500 rounds in training. Proficiency was not achieved in this time.

13. (U) Reference paragraph 2d(1), page 8, Personnel Clearances. Concur with recommendation. Observation and evaluation are not valid.

14. (U) Reference paragraph 2d(2), page 8, Consolidation of S2, S3 Classified Files. Do not concur. Method of control of classified documents in each unit will be dictated in large measure by the situation.

15. (U) Reference paragraph 2d(3), page 8, Meteorological Equipment Maintenance. Concur. 41st Artillery Group has forwarded a message to CG, Qui Nhon Support Command pointing out this deficiency.

16. (U) Reference paragraph 2e(1), page 9, Lack of required issue of WABTOC items. Concur.

17. (U) Reference paragraph 2e(2), page 9, Loss of TO&E trailers prior to deployment. Concur. 6th Battalion, 84th Artillery presently has all TO&E trailers on valid requisition.

18. (U) Reference paragraph 2f, page 9, Organization. Do not concur. Recommendations concerning organization should be determined by unit concerned. 41st Artillery Group has directed 6th Battalion, 84th Artillery to draft a proposed MTCE for additional personnel and equipment required to operate under mobile concept.

19. (U) Reference paragraph 2g, OTHER. Report was prepared by this headquarters based on extensive command and staff visits and observations and forwarded thru channels.

*Arnold*  
A. V. ARNOLD, JR.  
Colonel, Artillery  
Commanding.

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AVFA-AT-D (12 May 68) 2d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion, 84th Artillery for Period  
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR - 65 (R1)

DA, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam Artillery, APO 96350 29 MAY 1968

TO: Commanding General, I Field Force Vietnam, APO 96350

Concur with observations and recommendations in basic correspondence as in-  
dorsed by CO, 41st Arty Gp.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

  
GERALD G. YOUNG  
Major, Artillery  
Adjutant

13

AVFA-GC-OT (12 May 68) 3d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of 6th Battalion, 84th Artillery for  
Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

DA, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, APO 96350 8 JUN 1968

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam,  
ATTN: AVHGC-DST, APO 96375

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding  
endorsements and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



ROBERT C. GABBARD

1LT; A-1  
ASST ADJUTANT GENERAL

Copy furnished:  
IFFORCEV Arty

AVHGC-DST (12 May 68) 4th Ind (U)

CPT Arnold/ms/LBN 4485

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 6th Battalion 84th Artillery for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65, (RI)

HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375

23 JUN 1968

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-DT, APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 30 April 1968 from Headquarters, 6th Battalion (155mm) (Towed) 84th Artillery.

2. Comments follow:

a. Reference item concerning 6400 mil firing technique, page 6, paragraph 2c(3); and 1st Indorsement, paragraph 9: Concur.

b. Reference item concerning personnel clearances, page 8, paragraph 2d(1); and 1st Indorsement, paragraph 13. Since many individuals are given short notice on RVN orders, their clearance actions cannot always be completed prior to their departure. However, security clearances are no longer difficult to obtain in RVN. Enlisted personnel entering the Army subsequent to 30 June 1966 have had Entrance National Agency Checks (ENTNAC) conducted on them while in basic training. This is sufficient to grant a SECRET clearance. All senior enlisted personnel and officers are required to have National Agency Checks (NAC) completed and therefore meet one of the primary prerequisites for Interim TOP SECRET as well as final SECRET clearances.

c. Reference item concerning lack of required issue of WABTOC items, page 8, paragraph 2e(1); and 1st Indorsement, paragraph 16: Nonconcur. There is sufficient construction material on hand for all new units arriving in-country. Generators are a Closed Loop item and are only authorized to support valid MTOE/MTDA. All base camps are included in the MCA construction program, and the term "base camp" applies only to the major division or major command base camp. All other tactical areas of operation should consist of TOE tentage and equipment.

d. Reference item concerning loss of MTOE trailers prior to deployment, page 8, paragraph 2e(2); and 1st Indorsement, paragraph 17: Nonconcur. No priority of issue is required. Adequate stocks of trailers are on hand in depots. Action to determine status of unit requisitions is underway.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

*S. Nakatsukasa*  
S. NAKATSUKASA  
Captain, AGC  
Assistant Adjutant General

Copies furnished:

HQ, 6th Bn (155mm) (Towed) 84th Arty  
HQ, I FFORCEV

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GPOP-DT (12 May 68) (U) 5th Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 6th Bn, 84th Arty for Period Ending  
30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1) (U)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 25 JUN 1968

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the  
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding indorse-  
ments and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:



C.L. SHORTT  
CPT, ACC  
Asst AG

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 41ST ARTILLERY GROUP  
APO San Francisco 96368

AVGK-C

25 April 1968

SUBJECT: After Action Report: Deployment of 6th Bn, 84th Artillery

Commanding General  
I Field Force Artillery  
APO 96350

Per verbal request of CG, IFFV Artillery, after action report on initial deployment to RVN of the 6th Bn, 84th Artillery is submitted. Sequence of events, analysis of the weaknesses displayed during initial combat support mission, conclusions and recommendations are included.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

1 Incl  
as

t/CHARLES W. BINNEY  
Major, Artillery  
Adjutant

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED WHEN  
SEPARATED FROM CONFIDENTIAL  
INCLOSURE.

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AFTER ACTION REPORT  
INITIAL DEPLOYMENT, 6TH BN, 84TH ARTY

1. (C) Chronological sequence of events leading to initial deployment in combat.
  - a. 24 August 1967. Battalion organized at Ft Irwin, California under provisions of General Order 111, HQ, U.S. 6th Army. Deployment to RVN scheduled for early 1968. POSD: 18 Sep 67, ERD: 12 Feb 68, PRD: 5 Mar 68.
  - b. 23 December 1967. Liaison party consisting of battalion executive officer, property book officer and intelligence sergeant arrived in RVN for a 15-day tour of II CTZ for the purpose of obtaining information to assist battalion in preparing for deployment.
  - c. 16 March 1968. Advance party consisting of battalion commander, three firing battery commanders, property book officer, personnel warrant and 22 enlisted men arrived at Qui Nhon.
  - d. 19 March 1968. General cargo off-loaded at Qui Nhon and transported to Camp Radcliff, An Khe.
  - e. 24 March 1968. Main body debarked at Qui Nhon and deployed to base camp at An Khe. The battalion strength at this time was 41 officers, 4 warrant officers and 566 enlisted. Although only 10 enlisted below authorized strength, the battalion lacked experience among the artillery NCO's. The battalion was short 15 E5's, seven E6's and two E7's, primarily in MOS 13B40. The majority of E5's assigned were two-year inductees with approximately one year total service.
  - f. 24 March - 5 April 1968. Battalion prepared for deployment. Preparation included unpacking and inspection of equipment, small arms test firing, basic periodic tests for primary weapons, briefings on rules of engagement and clearance of fires and tours of combat areas by key personnel. The battalion engaged in approximately 126 hours training, 16 hours unpacking, and 30 hours constructing and improving positions at An Khe. The battalion fired 1445 155mm rounds during the preparation and training phase.
  - g. 4 April 1968. CO, 41st Artillery Group determined battalion was not ready for deployment. Deployment date rescheduled for 8 April. Training program was intensified to correct numerous deficiencies.
  - h. 8 April 1968. Entire battalion deployed to Dai Thanh (2) BR 8963 with mission of reinforcing 7th Battalion, 13th Artillery in support of 173d Abn Bde operation Velvet Hammer. RSOP was confused. Four thousand rds of 155mm ammunition were dumped at battalion position area per request of reinforced artillery. This was an excessive stockage which necessitated mobilization of all available trucks in the Group to transport the ammunition when the battalion displaced 10 April.

*Incl 1 to Incl 1*

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AVGK-C

25 April 1968

SUBJECT: After Action Report: 6th Bn 84th Arty (Cont'd)

i. 9 April 1968. Battalion received mortar attack at 0215 hours. Approximately 70 rounds fell in the position area resulting in four KIA and 43 WIA. One trailer was destroyed, vehicles were damaged with pierced radiators, tires and windshields. Battery C FDC was destroyed.

j. 10 April 1968. Battalion continued its mission, displaced Hq, A and B Batteries to LZ Crystal (BR 894658) and Battery C to LZ Jenny (BR 842567).

k. 11 April 1968. One Battery C howitzer fired three rounds with a 400 mil deflection error. Rounds impacted approximately 4000 meters from the intended target, killing one ARVN soldier and wounding seven.

l. 11 April 1968. Battery A fired two smoke rounds which impacted in the perimeter barrier wire at Battery C, 7th Battalion, 13th Artillery. Battery A position was misplotted 1200 meters on the battalion firing chart.

m. 12 April 1968. Battery C fired one round with incorrect data. Quadrant was 75 mils in error due to computing site as 83 mils instead of 8.3 mils. Battery C later fired one round 200 mils in error due to faulty lay of one piece during check of lay. CG, 173d Abn Bde suspended the battalion from firing in support of troops for safety reasons.

n. 13 April 1968. Battery C FDC bunker roof collapsed, injuring one man.

o. 14 April 1968. CO, 41st Artillery Group directed immediate infusion of selected key personnel and temporarily restricted battalion fires to piece one round with safety officer supervision as a training safety measure. Battalion was directed to conduct four hours FDC and section drill training per day until further notice.

2. (U) Specific weaknesses noted during preparation and deployment phases.

a. Fire direction personnel were not proficient in basic gunnery procedures. FDC's were not organized in a standard manner within the battalion.

b. FDC personnel were not organized for effective 24-hour operation.

c. FDC personnel were not proficient in installing and operation communication equipment.

d. FDC and firing batteries had not instituted an effective system of double checks.

e. Howitzer sections were extremely slow and inefficient in performing duties during firing.

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SUBJECT: After Action Report; 6th Bn, 84th Arty (Cont'd)

f. Howitzer sections were unfamiliar with procedures for 6400 mil firing.

g. Personnel were unfamiliar with procedures for conduct of basic periodic tests.

h. Liaison officer was not knowledgeable of requirements to submit friendly position locations to FDC.

i. Operations section was not proficient in communicating with, and submitting required reports to, higher headquarters.

j. Personnel were not familiar with proper methods of building bunkers, constructing double sandbag walls or installing perimeter barriers.

k. Personnel were untrained in methods of safely constructing overhead cover on structures and foxholes.

l. A coordinated position defense plan was not instituted.

m. Personnel were not effectively trained in proper protection from, and reaction to, mortar attacks. Many personnel were sleeping unprotected at the start of the 9 April attack.

n. With the exception of radio-teletype operation, field communication procedures were lax. Vehicle batteries supplying power for radios were allowed to discharge. A message center was not established. Generators were not grounded.

o. Mess operations were not properly planned and organized. Field kitchens were cluttered and unsanitary.

p. Ammunition storage and handling procedures were poor. Lots were not segregated. Protection from elements was haphazard.

q. Personnel deployed to field with insufficient quantities of personal clothing and TA 50-901 items.

r. Field equipment requirements were inadequately planned. Unnecessary equipment was taken to the field; some mission essential equipment was left in base camp, necessitating extra backhaul and resupply missions.

s. Transportation capability was restricted because of lack of trailers. No cargo trailers accompanied the battalion from CONUS.

t. Howitzers were deployed in poor state of repair, i.e., some fire control equipment needed replacement, breech and firing mechanisms were inoperative or excessively worn.

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## 3. (U) Analysis

a. General. Root causes of the overall weakness of the battalion are:

(1) Lack of thorough POM training in the major areas of fire direction, firing battery, construction of field fortifications and communications.

(2) Unfamiliarity with normal organization and functions for extended field operations.

(3) Lack of sense of urgency at all levels in executing the training mission.

b. Battalion training in CONUS was aimed primarily at satisfactorily completing battery and battalion training tests and the 6th Army and CONARC T.P.I. Specific training for Southeast Asia was lacking.

c. Field exercises during POM training were limited to four 1½-day ATT practices. No practical exercises in constructing field fortifications were included nor was problem play by higher and adjacent headquarters. Short field exercises failed to train units for extended operations.

d. Although various lessons-learned documents were available at Fort Irwin, the lessons were not effectively incorporated into training.

e. Training of the battalion did not reflect significant benefit from the battalion liaison team visit to RVN in December 1967.

f. Ref para 2s. The unit was directed to turn in all cargo trailers prior to leaving Fort Irwin. Battalion was unable to produce the document authorizing this action. The directive is believed to have emanated from Hq, Ft Irwin.

g. To some degree, the garrison environment of Camp Radcliff misled the officers and men to the assumption that after a few hours of work each day they could expect to relax and enjoy the comforts of PX, movies, showers and clubs.

h. The shortage of E5's, E6's and E7's was a contributing factor to the lack of proficiency in the howitzer sections. The spaces were filled by personnel of lower grades who could not be expected to provide critically needed experience for combat operations in RVN.

## 4. (U) Conclusions.

a. The lack of organization, training and discipline upon arrival

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in country rendered the battalion incapable of satisfactorily receiving instructions and executing orders in routine matters. The deficit in training was so great that two weeks of intensive training were insufficient to overcome weaknesses. A sense of urgency to retrieve the situation was absent.

b. Chiefs of sections were not trained in supervising the performance of their men; particularly during firing and laying of the pieces there was a lack of double check.

c. Battalion and battery ATT's should not be regarded as a complete training vehicle for deployment to Southeast Asia. Army Training program must be followed with emphasis on practical exercises.

d. Imaginative application of combat lessons learned must be included in POM training programs.

e. Solutions to problems of personnel fatigue, organization of shifts, concurrent requirements for bunkering, messing, maintenance, resupply and 24-hour operation cannot be realized in brief field exercises.

## 5. (U) Recommendations.

a. That the battalion continue its mission while concurrently conducting extensive remedial training.

b. That experienced key personnel continue to be infused into the battalion.

c. That cargo trailers presently on requisition be issued to the battalion as soon as possible.

d. That closer training supervision and more rigorous testing of deploying units be instituted in CONUS.

e. That POM training for artillery units include extended field problems. This training should be fully combat simulated complete with field fortification construction, 24-hour operation, 6400 mil firing, problem play by higher, adjacent and supported headquarters and a minimum of one displacement.

f. That drawings and specifications of approved bunkers and parapets be provided to units prior to deployment from CONUS.

g. That prior to deployment, newly arrived battalions spend at least one week in RVN in a field environment concentrating on section drill, field fortification, shakedown of equipment, communications and 24-hour operations.

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